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## **WAYS OF OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN 1-ST YEAR MATH AND IT STUDENTS**

*The article is devoted to the search for ways to overcome difficulties in teaching listening to 1st year students of the faculty of Math and Information technologies. It is very difficult to choose audio that would be suitable for each student in the group. To solve the problems the teacher is forced to develop tasks that meet different levels of training. Our goal is to find the most suitable ways to overcome the difficulties in teaching listening to IT students and develop a set of exercises for listening skills development based on the activity approach. At the end of the article there is a set of exercises developed on the basis of authentic material, considering the removal of difficulties that students may face while listening.*

Adults spend on average 70 % of their time socializing. Research shows that on average 45 % of the time is spent on listening and only 30 % on talking, 16 % on reading and 9 % on writing.

Listening comprehension is important in teaching a foreign language because it takes up most of the time when we communicate in a foreign language. Think about how much time you spend listening to others talk or listen to songs, news, lectures, YouTube, etc. Advances in new technologies have already introduced certain outcomes namely: have helped raise the level of listening skills in language teaching; provided input that can be very important for second language acquisition in general and for the development of listening and speaking skills in particular; promoted non-linear language processing and encouraged students to develop «holistic» strategies for texts.

A survey was conducted among 1st year students, in which they were asked to answer the question about reasons which, in their opinion, interfere with understanding speech by ear. The answers were distributed as follows: insufficient vocabulary; communication only with native Russian speakers with similar pronunciation characteristics; inability to distinguish words in the flow of speech, merging between words, changes in sounds in the flow of speech, swallowing; misinterpretation of what was heard, lack of experience in interacting with the language as such, i. e., lack of experience.

In connection with the above, foreign language teachers are constantly thinking about how to best include listening in the learning process of students and provide

options both inside and outside the classroom so that students develop listening skills and can cope with difficulties when listening to foreign language messages.

It is especially important to remove problems in teaching listening comprehension because within in a group students have very different levels of mastering a foreign language and it is very difficult to find a recording that would suit everyone in the group.

To solve problems, the teacher is forced to develop assignments that would not only meet different levels of training, but also contribute to the development of critical thinking among students, which is undoubtedly urgently needed in the current conditions of the global history development.

Today, the development of students' critical thinking is one of the urgent tasks in the learning process in general, and a foreign language in particular. Thinking critically means being inquisitive and using research methods, which involves asking yourself questions, systematically seeking answers, developing a point of view on a particular issue, and being able to defend this point of view with logical arguments. Critically thinking students are able to accept the multipolarity of the world around them, the possibility of various points of view coexistence, which instills tolerance in them, they know how to work in a team, they are able to abandon prejudice. The technology for the development of critical thinking was dealt with by: J. Steel, K. Meredith, Ch. Temple, S. Walter, I. O. Zagashv, S. I. Zair-Beck and others.

First of all, let's clarify what we mean by listening. In English, the term «listening comprehension» is used (perception and understanding by ear), which, according to foreign experts, most accurately conveys the essence of this independent type of speech activity. Listening audible speech understanding; actually, listening is a prerequisite of oral communication.

Practical experience of teaching a foreign language to students of Vitebsk State University named after P. M. Masherov convinces that listening is one of the most difficult types of speech activity.

According to E. N. Solovova, there exist 3 types of difficulties that prevent understanding the content of the information message: difficulties due to the conditions of listening, difficulties due to the individual characteristics of the source of speech, difficulties due to the linguistic features of the perceived material (use: a large amount of unfamiliar vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, colloquial formulas, special terms, abbreviations, elliptical constructions, precision words.) The last point is especially relevant for students of non-linguistic specialties.

In most groups, the level of English proficiency among students varies greatly, and this fact must be considered when selecting audio materials for classes.

There are two ways to deal with difficulties in the methodology: either their elimination or overcoming.

Note that the artificial elimination of difficulties in listening does not prepare for the perception of authentic, i.e. natural speech. The main goal of language teaching is to prepare the student for verbal communication in natural conditions, so the learning process will be effective only if the student has encountered the difficulties of authentic speech and has learned to overcome them.

Therefore, it seems correct not to eliminate, but to overcome these difficulties in the learning process. In addition, for listening it is best to choose authentic texts that are as close as possible to everyday life situations or depict burning issues faced by societies.

We believe that effective training for improving listening skills is the performance of rather difficult exercises, but subject to feasibility of these difficulties for students.

In the methodology there is a system of exercises aimed at removing the problems of listening. For example, repetition exercise after the speaker, exercises for the development of speech hearing, exercises for memory training, exercises for probabilistic forecasting training.

In addition, N. D. Galskova divides exercises that develop listening skills into 4 types:

1. Preparing for the perception of the text – pretext stage.
2. Accompanying auditory recordings perception.
3. Based on the listened recording (of a reproductive-productive nature).
4. Based on the listened recording (of a productive nature).

Note that not all domestic authors adhere to this option. For example, E. N. Solovova distinguishes 3 stages in working with audio texts: pre-text stage (before listening), the text listening stage (while listening), post-text stage (after listening), i. e., they are not divided into exercises of a reproductive-productive and simply productive nature.

Another important step in improving listening skills is quality control of listening skills formation. The most common methods of this control are: drawing up a plan for the listened story, highlighting semantic parts in the listened text, transmitting the main content, transmitting the full content, answering questions, performing tests of a different nature, etc.

In the context of the need to simultaneously develop auditory skills and critical thinking skills in first-year students, we consider the most appropriate technology to be the technology based on the didactic pattern of three stages in the process of working with information:

– challenge stage (awakening cognitive interest in the topic under study, independent determination by students of the direction in the topic being studied, updating the knowledge and experience of students on the topic being studied);

– comprehension stage (organization of active perception of the text; the purpose of this stage is to maintain interest and activity created at the challenge stage; to contact new information);

– stage of reflection (independent evaluation systematization of the studied).

Having studied the theoretical issue, we tried to compile a set of exercises aimed at overcoming difficulties in teaching listening in a group of 1st year students of the Math and IT faculty with different levels of English proficiency when studying the topic «The job interview» within the module «Professionally oriented communication».

## **THE JOB INTERVIEW**

### **I. Personal characteristics**

In pairs, match the adjectives below with their correct definitions and discuss how important these characteristics are for your job or the job that you want to apply for:

1. experienced	a. able to make yourself do something well
2. self-motivated	b. able to talk to people easily and share information
3. communicative	c. constantly doing a lot of work
4. enthusiastic	d. energetically interested in something and willing to be involved in it
5. dynamic	e. having lots of ideas and energy
6. hardworking	f. having skill or knowledge because you have done something many times

### **II. The cv**

Read the following cv summary and fill in the header for each section with ‘education’, ‘work experience’, ‘personal details’, ‘profile’ and ‘skills and interests’:

<p><b>Andrea Patarino</b>                      Rome, Italy                      _____<sup>1</sup>                      Date of birth: 23 June 1990                      Marital status: Single                      _____<sup>2</sup></p>
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A British Culture Studies and English Linguistics graduate with four years' experience in the field of international cultural cooperation. Self-motivated, dynamic and ready to meet new challenges.

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2010-2015 University of Rome, MA in British Culture Studies

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2013-present Project coordinator, British Council, Rome, Italy

2012-2013 Internship, National Youth Agency, Leicester, UK

2011-2012 Tour guide, Tourist Information Centre, Rome, Italy

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IT skills (Windows and Microsoft Office), fluent in English and Spanish, enjoys reading and skiing.

### III. Interview questions and answers

Look at the following 'difficult' questions that you might hear during a job interview:

How would you describe yourself?

What influenced you to choose a career in ...?

How has your university education prepared you for a job in ...?

Tell me about your current job. What have you been doing?

How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?

Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?

How do you handle pressure?

Why do you want to work for this company?

What do you feel you have to offer this company?

What personal weakness has caused you the greatest difficulty on the job?

What would you say has been your most rewarding accomplishment?

What are your goals for the future?

What do you think you'll be doing in five years' time?

#### Now read the following job ad:

*Language Worldwide is an established international language center seeking a dynamic, self-motivated and responsible person for the position of project coordinator. A suitable candidate must be a university graduate and be proficient in at least 2 languages, including English.*

- |                 |                               |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. be motivated | a. a well-established company |
| 2. manage       | b. by challenge               |
| 3. deal with    | c. certain tasks              |
| 4. motivate     | d. deadlines                  |
| 5. meet         | e. international projects     |
| 6. work         | f. others                     |
| 7. be part of   | g. outside partners           |
| 8. delegate     | h. under pressure             |

**Listen to an extract from Andrea's interview at Language Worldwide and tick the questions that you hear.**

**Listen again and put T (True) or F (False) next to the following statements:**

1. Andrea has always been interested in the British/American language and culture.
2. His current job mainly involves preparing budgets for projects.
3. He has worked as part of a team.
4. He had to replace one of the speakers at a British Council event.
5. He believes the job he is being interviewed for is tailored to his skills and qualifications.
6. His most rewarding achievement has been successfully completing his university degree.
7. His main weakness is handling pressure.
8. His long-term ambition is to start his own business.

#### **IV. Key expressions**

Complete the following collocations from the interview:

**Now look at the following expressions from the interview and match them to their functions below:**

I would describe myself as someone who is ambitious, hardworking and motivated by challenge.

As you can see from my CV, I've been working as a project coordinator for the British Council in Rome for several years.

My job has mainly involved organizing special events

Against the odds, I managed to successfully work with our partners and reschedule the project events.

I guess at times I am a little reluctant to delegate certain tasks.

I would say successfully completing my university degree has been my most rewarding accomplishment.

My long-term goals involve growing with a company where I can continue to learn, and take on additional responsibilities.

Once I gain the necessary experience, I see myself moving on to a management position.

- a. describing your current job
- b. describing your personal qualities
- c. describing a personal weakness
- d. describing how you overcame a difficult situation
- e. describing your ambitions
- f. describing your achievements

**V. Roleplay. In pairs, interview each other for a job of your choice. Use questions/expressions from this lesson and any others that you may need. Would you give your partner the job? Why/why not?**

Л. В. Кажкина

**Способы преодоления трудностей при обучении аудированию студентов факультета математики и информационных технологий ВГУ имени П. М. Машерова**

Аудирование — сложный рецептивный вид речевой деятельности, связанный с восприятием и пониманием информации на иностранном языке. Развитие аудитивных навыков происходит наравне с другими видами речевой деятельности во время учебных занятий. Длительность аудиотреков для студентов нелингвистических специальностей не должна превышать двух с половиной минут, чтобы студенты могли эффективно включиться в прослушивание.

Освоение аудитивных навыков происходит в три этапа: до прослушивания, во время прослушивания и после прослушивания. Необходимо строить учебные занятия с учетом всех этапов обучения аудированию и внедрять технологию развития критического мышления, представленную тремя этапами, а именно: вызовом, осмыслением содержания и рефлексией в данную модель.

Обучать студентов нелингвистических специальностей навыкам аудирования следует таким образом, чтобы эти навыки позволяли им осуществлять эффективное общение не только в аудитории, но и реальной жизни. Правильно подобранные аутентичные материалы и разнообразные задания, направленные на снятие возможных сложностей способствуют формированию аудитивных навыков и убежденности в практической пользе изучения иностранного языка.